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Sen. Daniel Moynihan Thursday defended his resignation as vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Moynihan, D-N.Y., said Sunday he was resigning as vice chairman to protest the Reagan administration's failure to keep the panel informed of the U.S. role in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

At a news conference Thursday, Moynihan said it was the legal duty of the Reagan administration to inform the committee what it was planning to do regarding the mining activities.

As proof of his charge that the Reagan administration was not keeping the committee informed, the senator cited a New York Times article. The article quoted a CIA source who said the agency sought delays in informing the Senate of the harbor mining.

Moynihan also said a Reagan administration decision not to abide by World Court rulings concerning Central America was "untenable" and would cause the United States to "suffer in world opinion."